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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1370
INFO RUCNARF/ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 3571
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 2647
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 5887
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 1597
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JAKARTA 000176

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EAP, EAP/MTS, EAP/MLS, PRM FOR HTRAN;
EAP/RSP, DRL, NSC FOR E.PHU

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PREF](#) [PGOV](#) [ID](#) [BM](#)

SUBJECT: MORE ROHINGYAS ARRIVE IN INDONESIA

REF: JAKARTA 162 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: DepPol/C Stanley Harsha, reasons 1.4(b+d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY. A second boatload of 198 Rohingyas landed off the eastern coast of Indonesia's Aceh Province on February 3. Interviews with the initial group of 193 Rohingyas/Bangladeshis currently housed on Sabang Island in Aceh were scheduled to conclude on February 3. DepPol/C stressed again to the Department of Foreign Affairs (Deplu) that the boat people should not be deported to Burma and that UNHCR be given access. Deplu gave us private assurances that Indonesia has no plans to return the Rohingyas to Burma. END SUMMARY.

SECOND BOATLOAD LANDS

¶2. (C) Deplu and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) were scheduled to conclude interviews with an initial boatload of 193 Rohingyas/Bangladeshis on February 3. That morning, a second boatload carrying 198 Rohingyas landed in East Aceh District near the town of Langsa, about 150 kilometers north of the North Sumatran capital of Medan. This second boat of Rohingyas trying to reach Malaysia also was apparently pushed off by Thai authorities, IOM told DepPol/C. An Indonesian Navy officer in East Aceh told the media that the second boat had been adrift for 21 days, and that 20 people on board had died at sea. Most of the rest, in critical condition, were being treated at a local hospital, the officer said.

¶3. (C) IOM told us late February 3 that Immigration authorities had reported seeing a possible third boat of Rohingyas off the coast of Lhoksemawe city in northeastern Aceh. We could not confirm this report of a third boat.

¶4. (C) IOM offered the GOI assistance with humanitarian needs of the second group, IOM country director Steve Cook told DepPol/C. The GOI accepted the offer with the condition that the assistance be funneled through the Indonesian Red Cross (PMI), denying IOM direct access to the second group, Cook added. Cook said IOM would need to find funding to help the second group. The second group will be kept in East Aceh rather than joining the first group on Sabang Island, where resources to take care of that group are already stretched to the limit, a Deplu official told DepPol/C.

PROTECTION OF ROHINGYAS REITERATED

¶5. (C) On February 3, DepPol/C raised the matter with Kristiarto Legowo, Deplu's Director for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, and the lead official handling this matter.

DepPol/C stressed that under no circumstances should the Rohingyas be returned to Burma as they would most certainly be persecuted. We also asked UNHCR to be granted access as soon as possible, repeating points made several times to the GOI in the past week (reftels). We also expressed our appreciation to Indonesia for the good care they have given the Rohingyas. Legowo said no decision would be made on next steps until after the interviews and full assessment have been completed.

¶6. (C) We delivered these same points on protection and access to Deplu Deputy Director General for Human Rights Arzal Firman on February 3. Firman confided to DepPol/C that the GOI realizes deporting the Rohingyas to Burma is not a viable option, both for humanitarian reasons and because doing so would hurt Indonesia's international reputation. Deplu was considering options on how it might find ways to resettle the Rohingyas voluntarily elsewhere, one major concern being that long-term resettlement in Indonesia could draw more Rohingyas to Indonesia's shores.

FOREIGN MINISTER: SENSITIVITIES ABOUT MYANMAR REGIME KEY CONSIDERATION

¶7. (C) Foreign Minister Hassan Wirajuda indicated in a February 2 statement to the media that sensitivities regarding how Burma authorities might treat the Rohingyas is a factor the GOI is considering.

¶8. (C) GOI is struggling to provide food and other supplies to the 193 persons on Sabang, with additional assistance

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urgently needed. Australian immigration authorities in Jakarta agreed informally to permit IOM to divert USD10,000 of funding for another project to help with this emergency, Minister Counselor for Immigration at the Australian Embassy in Jakarta (strictly protect) told DepPol/C. IOM submitted a detailed budget request to PRM for the remaining USD15,000 to cover the rest of the emergency needs, which would be sufficient for two weeks of food, medicine, and other basic needs. IOM will submit a budget request later to cover the longer-term resettlement needs of the population. However, this funding would not meet the needs of the second boatload.

IOM will be seeking funding to take care of this group as well, Cook said.

¶9. (C) It remains unclear whether the second and possible third boatload are among the original four boats reportedly pushed off by Thai authorities or are from a separate migration, sources agreed. However, Callaghan speculated that these boats might all be from the same group which departed Burma several weeks ago and that the intervention by Thai authorities might have put them off their course to Malaysia, forcing them to drift onto Indonesian shores. He said it is rare for migrants from Burma to end up in Indonesia.

DOING ITS BEST

¶10. (C) Indonesia is grappling to deal with an unexpected wave of Rohingya boat people without adequate resources. It also wants to manage the situation in a humane way without drawing more migrants to its shores. Indonesia has no plans to repatriate the Rohingyas or take any other precipitous actions. The immediate need is for assistance to help IOM and Indonesia cope with emergency needs while helping Indonesia to deal with long-term issues.

HUME